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**CITY OF CAMBRIDGE LAUNCHES INNOVATIVE  
CORPORATE EMERGENCY ACCESS SYSTEM**

**Program Keeps Businesses and Infrastructure Operational Following a Crisis or Disaster**

Cambridge, Massachusetts – Mayor Michael A. Sullivan has taken steps to ensure that businesses in Cambridge remain operational wherever possible in the wake of an emergency or disaster, by implementing the new Corporate Emergency Assessment System (CEAS). The CEAS program was designed by the Business Network of Emergency Resources (BNet), a not-for-profit organization dedicated to establishing practical, effective emergency and crisis management solutions through partnerships between local government and business.

CEAS is a credentialing program that operates in conjunction with local government; the program gives companies the ability to access their workplace quickly following an emergency event that results in travel or access restrictions. By allowing businesses to initiate a reentry and recovery process as quickly as possible, companies can maintain core IT systems, meet regulatory requirements and secure critical data and records in the aftermath of an emergency; all with the aim of continuing the functions of business throughout or soon after a disaster.

“It is in the interests of Cambridge to assimilate programs such as CEAS into our overall plan for dealing with emergencies and disasters, if they occur, in our city,” said Cambridge Mayor Michael A. Sullivan. “Keeping the residents of Cambridge safe is our top priority and to do this we need to ensure we keep as many services operational as possible. Supporting infrastructure and business is a key element of this.”

“The best response to any emergency is to get the city back on its feet as soon as possible,” commented Robert W. Healy, Cambridge City Manager. “With this system law enforcement officers can quickly identify CEAS accredited critical employees and allow them access to their business. In order to return to stability as quickly as possible after a crisis we need to engage both public and private sectors, the CEAS program enables us to do this.”

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“Protecting people is the central reason we plan for emergencies and is inextricably linked to safeguarding and restoring critical infrastructure and businesses,” said Peter Picarillo, Executive Director of BNet, Inc. and former Director of Public-Private Initiatives for the New York City Office of Emergency Management. “Unfortunately, the controlled reentry processes needed to restore these vital lifelines are often overlooked, a problem exacerbated by an estimated 85% of this infrastructure being privately owned.”

Controlled reentry should not be limited to utilities and governmental services but needs to include private enterprise as well, particularly the critical financial sector and other businesses required to support a reentering population. In many regions, the loss of certain business sectors can have a profoundly detrimental effect on the economy, as seen recently with the energy sector in the Gulf of Mexico. Businesses that recover quickly help limit the economic damage locally, regionally and even nationally. They also help to limit business failures, reduce unemployment, retain commerce, restore the tax base and enable the displaced to begin their recovery.

“Business disruptions or emergencies can cost a company millions of dollars, and can even end its trading days,” commented Robert Leviton, M.D., President of BNet, Inc. “A company’s productivity and profits are dependent upon the safety and effectiveness of its operations. The ultimate goal of BNet’s program is to help organizations resume critical business functions as soon as possible after a business disruption occurs.”

BNet’s CEAS program has already been implemented in four northeastern cities: New York City, Buffalo, Boston, Massachusetts, and Stamford, Connecticut. More cities nationwide are expected to participate in the near future. Any city, county or state can adopt CEAS through a written agreement with BNet. Once adopted by a municipality, any business can elect to participate in the program, paid for by participating businesses through a per card fee. Companies may designate a limited number of critical employees or contractors to receive a CEAS card prior to any emergency or disaster. This approach of ‘pre-credentialing’ was a key recommendation of a study carried out in 1997 by the Joint Loss Reductions Partnership (JLRP). This alleviates the need for public officials to develop impromptu credentialing processes at their own expense following a disaster.

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The CEAS program places the responsibility on businesses to manage their cardholders by identifying their critical employees as well as managing turnover and re-assignment of personnel. This allows the government to reap the benefits of the program without shouldering the administrative burden, whereas previously staff allocation and cost had been the constraining factors for government in establishing a pre-credentialing program.

The program also allows government departments to credential their own critical vendors or service providers that may not be easily identifiable during reentry. Local police agencies enforce CEAS through a written protocol that can be easily integrated into local emergency operations plans making it an ideal way to initiate a controlled reentry policy. The CEAS high priority access cards are an easy way for local law enforcement officers to differentiate between critical employees approved for priority access to an area and other civilians.

The cities involved have already given such a positive response, not only to the concept of CEAS but to the practicalities of such a system, that BNet has been encouraged to plan further products and services. BNet is now working towards holding symposiums and conferences designed to educate employers and governments on how best to plan for reentry and recovery after a disaster.

“Response to a disaster is clearly more than just getting people out; it is also about getting people back in,” says Picarillo. “By facilitating a system of priority access for critical private sector employees we, at BNet, can speed the recovery of our essential infrastructure and vital businesses, to bring our cities back to prosperity more quickly.”

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**About Business Network of Emergency Resources, Inc (BNet)**

BNet, headquartered in New York City, is a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to establishing emergency and crisis management solutions in partnerships between the public and private sector. Created by BNet, the Corporate Emergency Access System (CEAS) uses a ‘critical employee access card’ system to mitigate the economic loss incurred through any business emergency and accelerate recovery time for both business and government. For more information see [www.ceas.com](http://www.ceas.com).